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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

11 October 1983

European Reaction to Your SpeechSummary

Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria responded quickly and angrily, largely echoing the Soviet line that your speech represented an attempt to overturn postwar realities in Europe and to drive a wedge between the socialist countries. The Poles also denounced your speech, but only after several days; the Hungarians have been only mildly critical. The East Germans have given little attention to it and the Romanians have not commented at all. Comments made privately on your visit to the area tend to be more positive than those made for the public record and subject to Moscow's scrutiny. West Europeans have not reacted officially, although some West German government officials have unofficially indicated discomfort with the speech.

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Strident remarks made by Prague and Sofia reflect sensitivity to the specific criticisms made against them, as well as their knee-jerk inclination to echo the Soviet line on East-West matters. Czechoslovak press commentaries branded the speech slanderous and insulting, and the new Czechoslovak Ambassador to the United States objected to the US' differentiation policy, which he said categorizes the East European states as either "good guys" or "bad guys." The Bulgarians delivered a strong protest to the US Ambassador in Sofia objecting to the "very crude attacks" on Bulgaria and on socialism, and said that the speech had made improvement in bilateral relations more difficult. A Bulgarian press commentary denied that Bulgaria is abusing human

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rights and acting as a proxy to the Soviets in aiding terrorists. [redacted]

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Polish commentaries focused on similar themes, criticizing especially the speech's "brutal attacks" on the USSR and its efforts to divide the socialist countries. One commentary denounced the speech as an attempt to subvert Poland by threatening to withhold economic assistance unless Warsaw accepts "pro-Washington compromises." [redacted]

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Budapest's muted reaction reflects its efforts to maintain good relations with the United States while denying any suggestion of disloyalty to the USSR. In a carefully worded article in the party's daily newspaper, the Hungarians criticized the speech's effort to upset the status quo in Europe and asserted that attempts to play the socialist countries off against one another were doomed to failure because "that which divides us...is considerably less than that which is common for us." The commentary advocated a "partnership" with Western countries, but argued that the West must accept Hungary for what it is -- including its different social system and alliance commitment. [redacted]

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The Hungarians are uncomfortable with being singled out as beneficiaries of the US' differentiation policy. [redacted] a

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Hungarian Foreign Ministry official [redacted]

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[redacted] the speech would create problems for Hungary with the USSR and that it aided hardliners in Moscow by demonstrating US intentions

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[redacted]

to undermine Soviet control in Eastern Europe. A Bulgarian diplomat in Budapest told a US official that the Hungarians had been surprised and upset at being praised in the speech and were taking steps otherwise to demonstrate their loyalty to the Warsaw Pact.

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We believe that the Hungarians intend to continue to develop relations with the United States. The US Embassy in Budapest reports that privately the Hungarians were pleased with your visit, which was warmly treated in the press.

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Romanian silence on your speech, as well as relatively sparse media coverage of your visit to Bucharest, probably stem from a desire to demonstrate indifference to the views of either East or West. In like vein, the Yugoslavs accorded your visit to Belgrade positive public treatment and made little comment on the Vienna speech. In typically "even-handed" fashion, the press reported the speech, but also replayed East European criticisms of it.

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West German Reaction

According to West German press reports, some government officials in Bonn were unofficially critical of the speech. They were reported to prefer a quieter approach to differentiation in order to avoid raising suspicions in Moscow and strengthening hardliners in East European governments. They also claim to rank the East European regimes differently than does the United States, placing emphasis on their tolerance toward their own citizens, openness to the West and cooperativeness with Bonn, rather than on their relationship with the USSR. On the basis of these criteria, they place Hungary and Bulgaria in the favored category, Poland and Romania in the gray zone, and Czechoslovakia at the bottom. East Germany does not fit into this hierarchy because of Bonn's concern for the special inner-German relationship. Some West Germans are said to be concerned that these differences in outlook could cause problems if Washington attempts to make differentiation an alliance policy.

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